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### SHAKESPEARE AND ITALIAN GEOGRAPHY

It has been suggested in defence of Shakespeare's knowledge of Italian geography that when Valentine travelled by boat from Verona to Milan his water trip was not upon the sea but upon the rivers of upper Italy (See note in R. W. Bond's ed. of *Two Gentlemen of Verona* (1. l. 53, 54), Bobbs-Merrill Co., Publishers). However, the route that he might have taken on this river trip has not been indicated. The Camden Society's publication of the British Museum copy (believed to be unique) of *The Pylgrymage of Syr R. Guylforde, Knight, to the Holy Land, A. D. 1506*, enables us to follow Valentine from Verona to Milan by a combined river and canal route.

Sir Richard Guylforde's chaplain, the writer of this tract, gives us a detailed account of their journey from England to Venice, where his party together with other pilgrims were to set sail for Jaffa. The first part of their journey which led them through France by way of Normandy, Paris, and Lyon to the boundary of western Italy does not concern us here. Entering Italy from Lyon the party continued to travel by horse as far as Alessandria, an Italian city about midway between Genoa and Milan. There their trip by boat began:

(p. 5.) Saterdaye to Alexandrya, and there Sonday all daye, . . . (our friends) also stufed us with vitaylle, brede, and wyne *in our barge*: there we lefte our horses and toke the water of Tannar. Mondaye the .xi.daye of Maij we toke shypynge there, and aboute .x. myle thens the sayde Tannar brought us into the Poo, by syde Bassynyana, whiche stondeth uppon the Poo. The same daye we passyd Pauya, and lay that nyght at Seint Jacobo, a vyllage.

Tuesday, Wednesday, and Thursday they continued their trip down the Po, until they had passed Ferrara on Thursday night.

(p. 6.) Frydaye somewhat byfore noone we lefte all the Poo and toke our course by a lytell ryver that commeth to the same, called the Fosse, *made and cutte out by hande, whiche brought us overthawart into another ryver, called Latyze* [i.e. the Adige], *that commeth from Verone and Trent*; and yet within a whyle we traversed out of that ryver into an other lytell ryver, whiche brought us thawarte agen into Latyze which Latyze broughte us into Chose upon the see, called in Latyne Claudium, where we lay all night, .xxv. myle frome Venys.

Valentine's course so far as it coincided with Sir Guylforde's river trip reversed the direction of travel. "The lytell ryver

that commeth to the same (the Po), called the Fosse, made and cutte out by hande, which brought us overthawart into another ryver, called Latyze [the Adige], that commeth from Verone and Trent," made it possible for Valentine's "barge" bound from Verona for Milan to gain the Po. Once on the Po Valentine would have continued westward as far as the Lambro, a tributary of the Po, upon which the remaining distance, or most of the remaining distance to Milan, might have been covered.

The opinion, one time generally held, that Shakespeare was astray in his Italian geography when he sent Valentine by boat from Verona to Milan, can no longer be entertained. Shakespeare's knowledge of the practice in sixteenth century Italy of travelling considerable distances by inland water routes<sup>1</sup> was, as we see, accurate; and was gained in all probability, not from visiting Italy himself, but from the accounts of English travellers, who, as in the case of Sir Richard Guylforde, had used the rivers and canals of northern Italy as the most convenient means in that country of travelling from one city to another.

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<sup>1</sup> It will be noticed that it was by the use of canals, such as the one described here as "made and cut out by hande," that trips by boat in upper Italy were made possible in the sixteenth century that now by this means could not be accomplished.